

REMARKS

This communication is a full and timely response to the aforementioned Decision on Appeal of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences dated . By this communication, claim 16 is amended, and claims 1-4, 6, 9-11, 23-27 and 31-35 are cancelled. Claims 12-15 and 17-22 are not amended and remain in the application. Thus, claims 12-22 are pending in the application. Claims 12 and 16 are independent.

Reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

I. Decision On Appeal

Claims 1-4, 6, 9-27 and 31-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawai (U.S. Patent No. 6,468,902) in view of Nunoue et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,905,275).

In the Decision on Appeal, the Board of Appeals sustained the rejections of claims 1-4, 6, 9-11, 23-27 and 31-35, and reversed the rejections of claims 12-22.

Without acquiescing to the rejections of claims 1-4, 6, 9-11, 23-27 and 31-35 and without prejudicing Applicants' right to pursue the subject matter of these claims in an appropriate continuation application, claims 1-4, 6, 9-11, 23-27 and 31-35 have been cancelled to place the application in condition for allowance.

Claim 16, which depended from claim 12, has been rewritten in independent form to include the features of claim 12.

Accordingly, claims 12-22, whose rejections were reversed by the Board of Appeals, are the only claims remaining in the application.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, an early notification of the allowance of the instant application is respectfully requested.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner believes there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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